

# Update on "What's going on with births down under in Australia?"

Email response from ABS and evidence that the claimed birth data lag might actually be a data lag...

Jessica Rose  
Nov 14

259 86

One of my amazing readers [Mary Beth Pfeiffer: Investigative journalist/author](#) - by the way, you're all incredible and I swear that THIS is the new peer review process that works - had written to the Australian Bureau of Statistics to ask about the data that I wrote about on a previous [Substack](#) (and that many others are reporting on). A representative from the ABS kindly replied:

Thanks for your enquiry.

Please find a response from our Demography team below.

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Q1: Can you explain the [trend in births](#) in Australia for the last two months of 2021?

A: Trend in births for December 2021 can be found in the attached spreadsheet. *(See attached file: Births by year of occurrence and month.xlsx)*

[For the reader's interest, this excel file is not useful. They just listed concordant numbers for 2019-2020 in the December column which basically means that they just typed in some numbers for December. To me, it's meaningless. I want to see if what they claim is true and will be investigating using Wayback. Update: there are no snapshots that I could find that provided any new information.]

Q2: Is the data complete?

A: Occurrence data is incomplete because of a lag in registration. Each year, the ABS receives births data from each state and territory's Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This includes all births that occurred and were registered in Australia during the preceding year.

There is usually an interval between the occurrence and registration of a birth (referred to as a registration 'lag') and as a result, some births occurring in one year are not registered until the following year or later. This can be caused by either a delay by the parent(s) in submitting a completed form to the registry, or a delay by the registry in processing the birth. Births which occur in December are likely to be registered in the following year. [The Methodology section](#) (under Data quality) of each year's release of Births, Australia discusses this interval in more detail.

Q3: Is a reporting issue involved that shows a ~70% decline in December 2021 from a year earlier?

A: Due to a lag in registration, only 6,659 births that occurred in December 2021 were registered in 2021. Most of the remaining occurrences will be registered in the following year. Using 2019 and 2020 data as examples, the occurrences for December 2020 and 2019 were 6,683 and 7,655 but then increased drastically by the time the official Births, Australia report came out. At this point, the totals had reached 22,695 and 23,231.

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I hope this helps! Please let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks,  
*Bloo-blee*  
ABS Media

It doesn't help, but thank you for answering! It's more than some 'Bureaus' do.

## The point is that vital ABS statistics are not up-to-date a full year following data capture.

This is not ok, especially in the face of many other countries reporting excessively low birth rates.

What we really want to be able to show is whether or not there is a lag in data entry using their data. We can certainly try to do this. We can compare the monthly data as reported by the ABS with the yearly aggregate data also reported by the very same ABS and try to find discrepancies. These data should match. We can also look at death and migration data to try to get a better idea of what the aggregate population comprises and perhaps which data that comprises it, is lacking, if any. By the way, if I have made any obvious mistakes, or erroneously stated anything anywhere herein, please let me know. This was my first time doing anything data since driving all over Europe: my brain hasn't settled.

Let's look at the plot I made here with a couple of additions (Figure 1). I added the mean number of births per year for 2011-2020 (red line) plotted by month, and the area under the curve highlighted in pink to represent the number of births that should be there for 2021, but are not yet, claimed by ABS to be due to a lag in data entry. The purple line is the 2021 birth data unchanged from the original ABS report. I made this chart simply to visually highlight the 'lacking' births according to the monthly ABS data. Numerically, there are 25,319 births that should currently be in the monthly ABS data set.

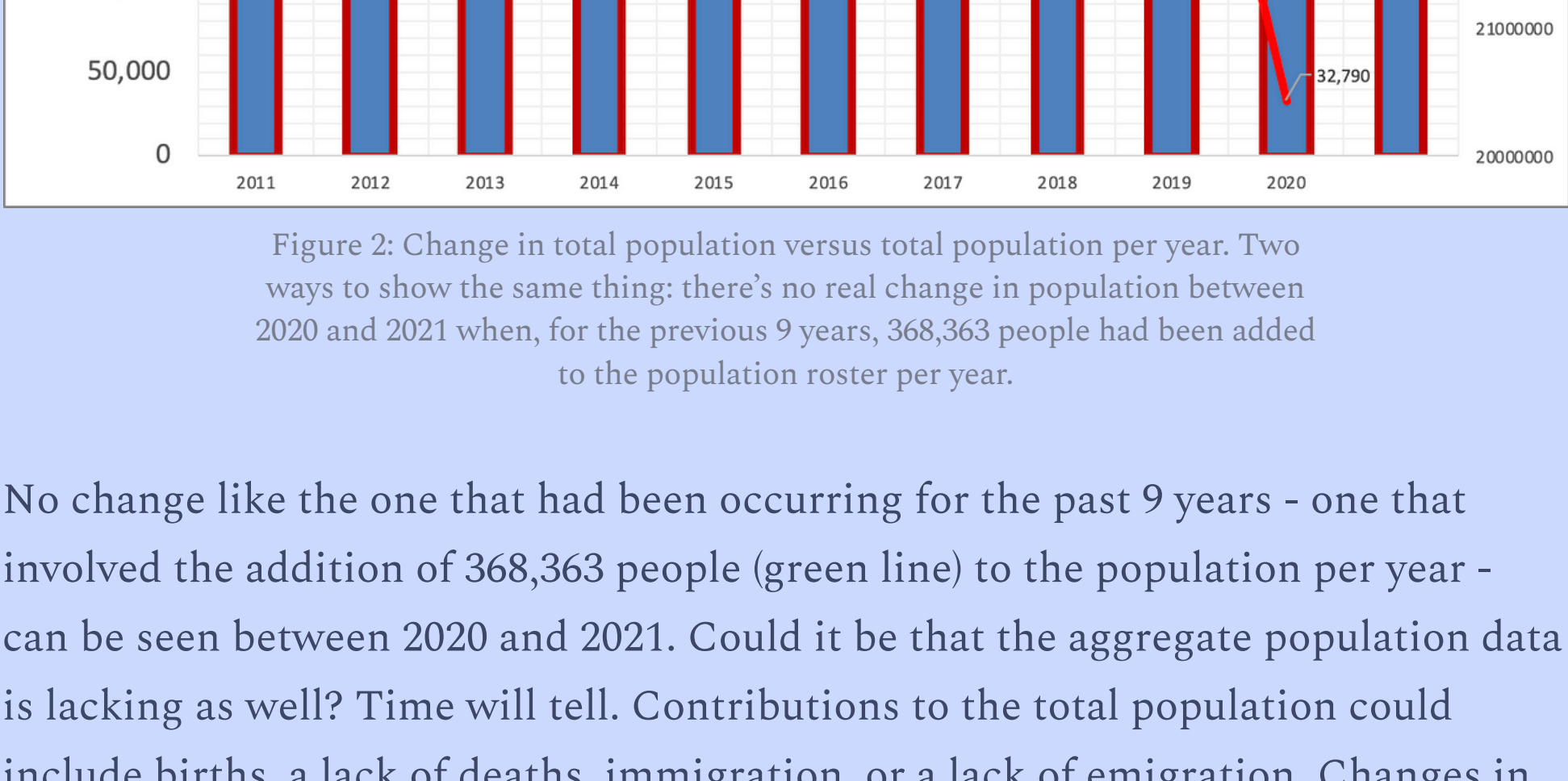


Figure 1: Births as per ABS monthly data year year showing number of births 'missing' from 2021 data shown in pink.

Let's look at the aggregate total population data for the past 10 years without considering stratification by month.

The aggregate data comes from here. I plotted the changes in the population from year to year for the past 10 years (red line) as shown below in Figure 2 (according to data recorded in 33010DO001 Births, Australia 2021 Released at 11:30 am (Canberra time) Tuesday 25 October 2022), against the total population data.

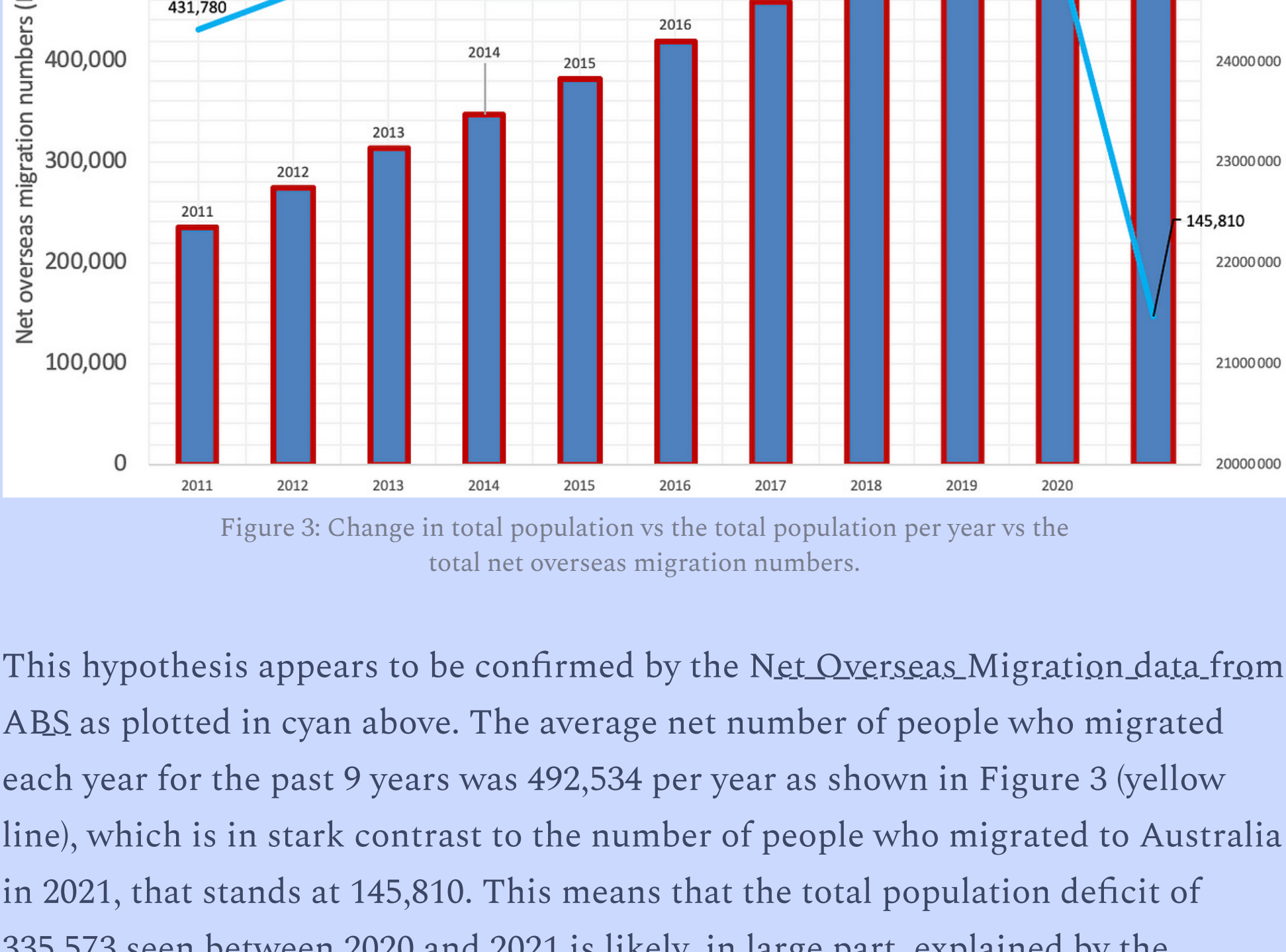


Figure 2: Change in total population versus total population per year. Two ways to show the same thing: there's no real change in population between 2020 and 2021 when, for the previous 9 years, 368,363 people had been added to the population roster per year.

No change like the one that had been occurring for the past 9 years - one that involved the addition of 368,363 people (green line) to the population per year - can be seen between 2020 and 2021. Could it be that the aggregate population data is lacking as well? Time will tell. Contributions to the total population could include births, a lack of deaths, immigration, or a lack of emigration. Changes in populations will always be a balance of all four.

So let's talk about migration. Aussies (and everyone else) were locked up in 2021. So there shouldn't have been much migration in 2021, right? I believe even airports were closed for a while in 2021, right? So, by hypothesis, the relatively small delta in the population between 2020 and 2021 could be explained by a lack of migration rather than a birth deficit, right?

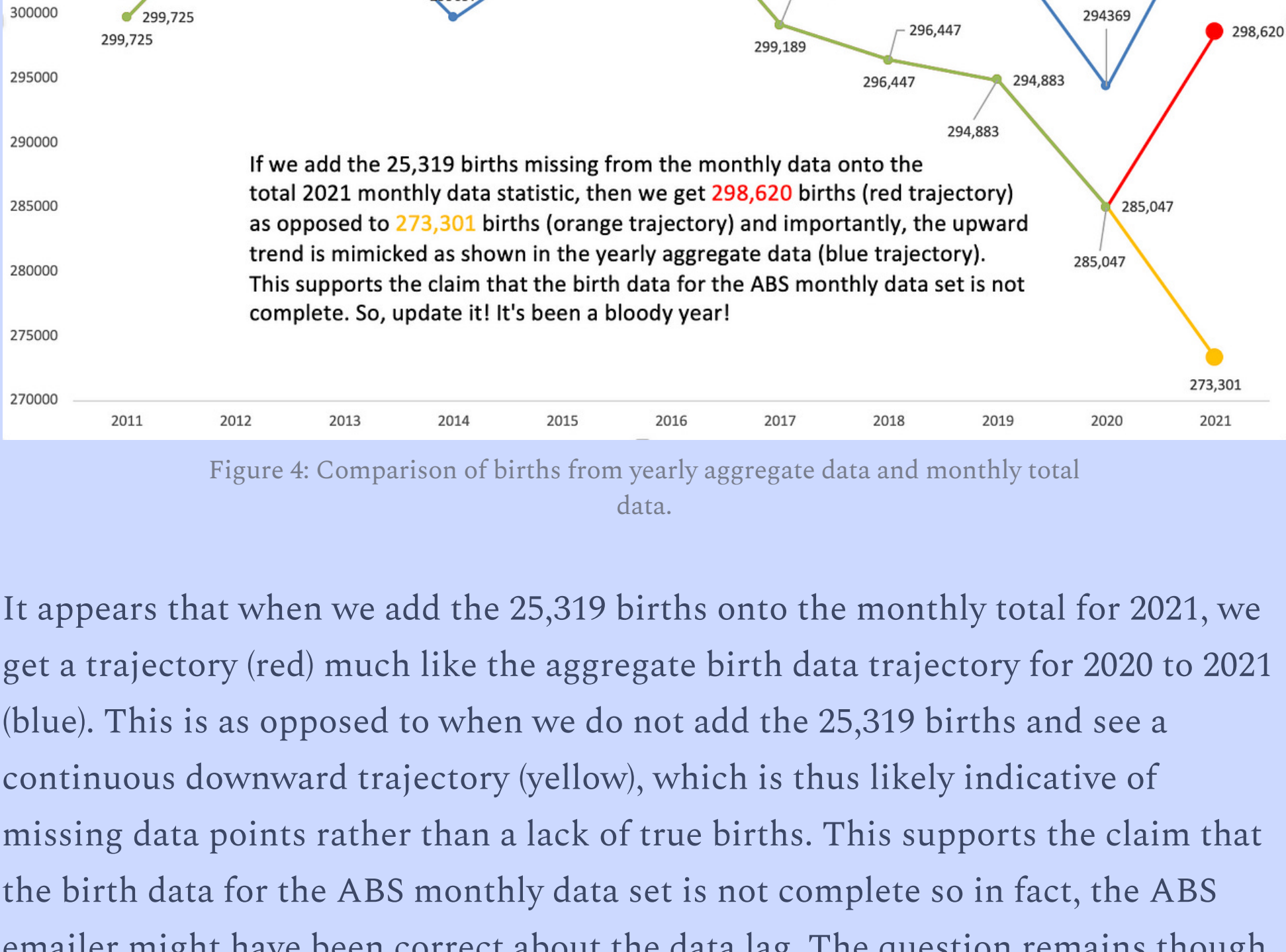


Figure 3: Change in total population vs the total population per year vs the total net overseas migration numbers.

This hypothesis appears to be confirmed by the [Net Overseas Migration data](#) from ABS as plotted in cyan above. The average net number of people who migrated each year for the past 9 years was 492,534 per year as shown in Figure 3 (yellow line), which is in stark contrast to the number of people who migrated to Australia in 2021, that stands at 145,810. This means that the total population deficit of 335,724 seen between 2020 and 2021 is likely, in large part, explained by the 346,724 people who didn't migrate in 2021 that normally would have, according to the past 9 years, if not for psychopathic movement mandates. Not too many people finding Australia an attractive location to move to? Or perhaps just not able to physically get there due to 'travel restrictions'? How great for tourism are psychopaths, eh?

Indeed, far fewer people entered Australia in 2021 than for previous years, adding to the likelihood that the lack of change in total population in the aggregate data may be more due to lack of immigration than due to lack of births.

We still have no definitive answers about the birth 'deficit' but there's one more thing we can look at to try to get some more evidence. We can compare the aggregate birth data for 2021 with the total monthly data (total for all months) birth data for 2021 with and without including the additional 25,319 births to see what the comparative trajectories look like.

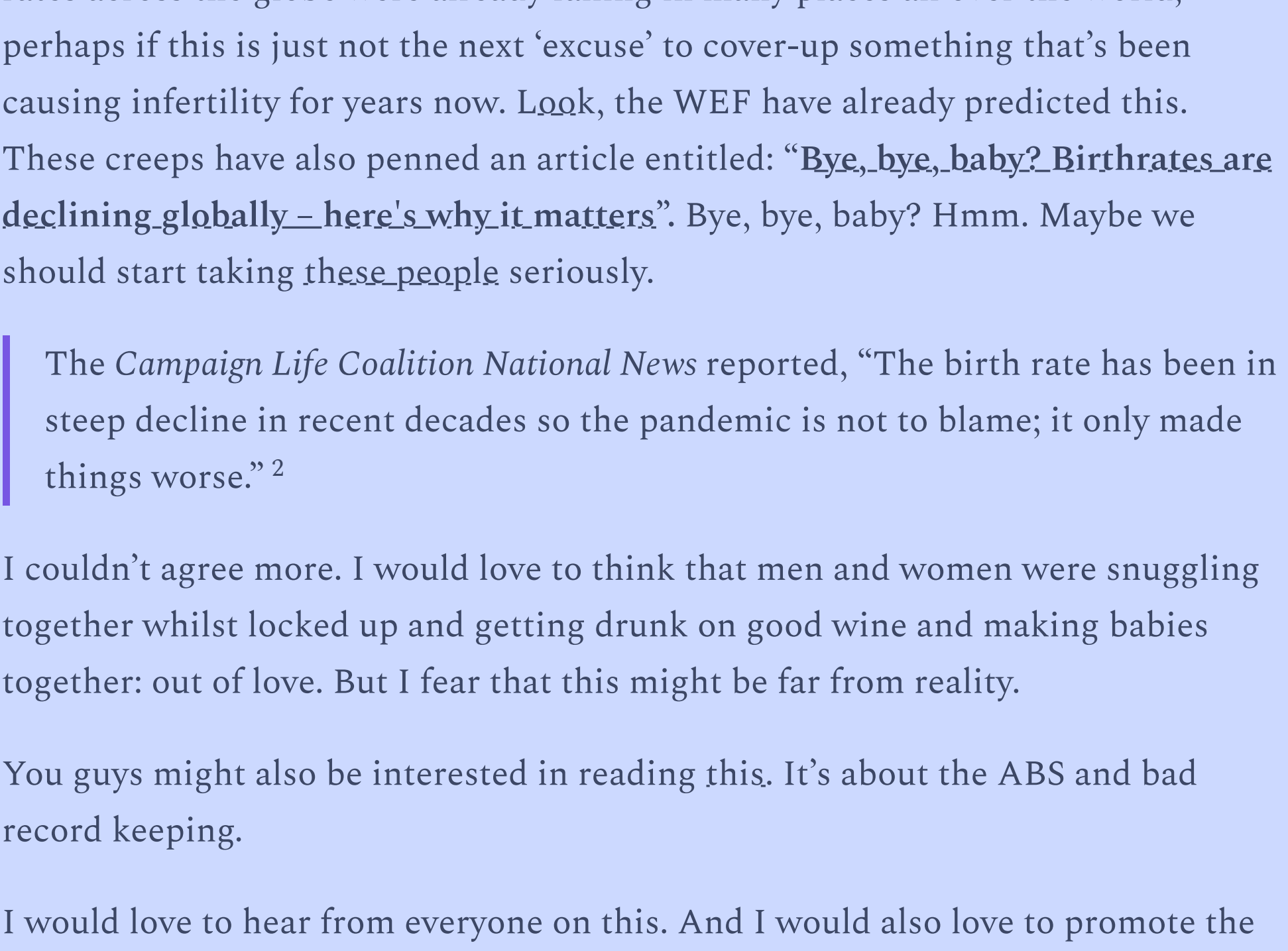


Figure 4: Comparison of births from yearly aggregate data and monthly total data.

It appears that when we add the 25,319 births onto the monthly total for 2021, we get a trajectory (red) much like the aggregate birth data trajectory for 2020 to 2021 (blue). This is as opposed to when we do not add the 25,319 births and see a continuous downward trajectory (yellow), which is thus likely indicative of missing data points rather than a lack of true births. This supports the claim that the birth data for the ABS monthly data set is not complete so in fact, the ABS emailer might have been correct about the data lag. The question remains though, why the hell is it taking so long to get updated data?

We can answer some questions.

Question #1: Can the deficit of 335,573 people in the total population count for 2021 be explained by the missing births? No. There are only 25,319 births missing if we accept that these births are even actually missing. See Figure 2. They still might be.

Question #2: Can the deficit of 335,573 people in the total population count for 2021 be explained by excess deaths? No. There are only 15,184 excess deaths in 2021 according to the [ABS death data](#). Data not shown. I can provide this if you want.

Question #3: Can the deficit of 335,573 people in the total population count for 2021 be explained by a lack of immigration? It could. It appears to be the most likely explanation considering that the deficit in people from lack of migration almost equates to the difference in population between 2020 and 2021. A surplus of 11,151 people would still need to be explained.

Question #4: Could these deficits in both the aggregate and monthly data be due to lags in the data entry? Maybe. I can't tell with certainty from this data. But it is possible.

I would guess that there are decreases in all things growth for 2021, and that would include births, because of the COVID-19 nonsense.

Sometimes in data exploration, you just end up with nothing. That's ok too.<sup>1</sup> Apologies for stupid mistakes I may have made. I am still in road trip mode.

Ultimately, after all this, I believe that the problem we have here lies in the fact that the ABS vital statistics need to be updated to *reflect reality*. It is extremely annoying that we, as data analysts, have to play these guessing games, especially in times of peril and in times of data debauchery. It is also relevant and concerning that birth deficits are being reported in other countries like the [UK](#), Hungary, so I will add again with zest, *that it is essential to record birth data accurately and promptly* in the case of the Australian ABS data, and all data sets, for that matter.

On a darker note I also have to wonder, since according to the [BBC news](#), fertility rates across the globe were already falling in many places all over the world, perhaps if this is just not the next 'excuse' to cover-up something that's been causing infertility for years now. Look, the WEF have already predicted this. These creeps have also penned an article entitled: "[Bye, bye, baby? Birth rates are declining globally—here's why it matters](#)". Bye, bye, baby? Hmm. Maybe we should start taking these people seriously.

The [Campaign Life Coalition National News](#) reported, "The birth rate has been in steep decline in recent decades so the pandemic is not to blame; it only made things worse."<sup>2</sup>

I couldn't agree more. I would love to think that men and women were snuggling together whilst locked up and getting drunk on good wine and making babies together: out of love. But I fear that this might be far from reality.

You guys might also be interested in reading this. It's about the ABS and bad record keeping.

I would love to hear from everyone on this. And I would also love to promote the afore-mentioned statement about getting drunk on good wine and doing the love thing instead of the hate thing. This is what we are. We are human. Let us be. Create. Love. Give.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that if the total population data is an accumulation of the deaths, births, migrations (and population) from the previous year, then the total population according to the ABS data should be 25,939,626 for 2021 (births 2021: 309,996; deaths 2021: 171,469; immigration 2021: 145,810; total population 2020: 25,655,289). But in reality, the total population for 2021 is lower than this at 25,688,079 as shown in Figures 3 and 4. The question would be, why? Who are these 251,547 other people? Where did they come from?

<sup>2</sup> <https://theinterim.com/issues/population/canada-birth-rate-hits-all-time-low/>

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Nikki Vella Nov 14 Liked by Jessica Rose  
It seems a little weird that the statistics are 12 months behind & that the ABS is pointing fingers to parents being tardy in their registration of the birth. In order to apply for maternity leave, one needs to register the birth of their child. The Australian government has in the past also paid a 'Baby Bonus' to new parents for which, of course, the birth needs to be registered in order to receive the government payment. I don't know if the Baby Bonus scheme is still in use, though. Also, parents who want to receive family tax benefits obviously need to register the birth of their child to receive them. Then there's Medicare: babies cannot receive any post-natal care until they are on their parents Medicare card which, of course, requires registration. So there are many reasons why parents would not delay reporting the birth of a child. Either the ABS is seriously deficient in updating statistics or there is an anomaly in the birth rates. I don't believe that the delay in parental reporting is a significant factor, despite what the ABS says.

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Justin Nov 14 Liked by Jessica Rose  
Australia's public broadcaster the ABC is providing some very bizarre commentary on reaching "Peak Child" and that our fertility rate is declining whilst giving no reason. It's like we are being programmed to accept collapsing fertility as normal or natural!...

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-13/australs-population-reaches-eight-billion-people/101643854>

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